

REPORT TO: 3MG Executive Sub-Board

DATE: 19th April 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Revisions to Proposed Structural Landscaping on HBC Fields.

WARDS: Ditton

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Members on revisions to the design, planning issues and implementation of the structural landscape around the area proposed for development on the 'Halton Fields' site.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Members note the report.**
- (2) Members approve the submission of the revision to the existing planning application.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A Planning Application for the Landscape infrastructure on the 'HBC Fields' site was approved in January 2006. With the exception of some improvement works to Halebank Recreation Ground, the work has not yet been implemented, as most of it is located on tenanted land. The Council has been negotiating with the tenants to achieve the surrender of the leases.

3.2 Since the date of the planning approval, several issues have arisen, which may impact on the approved scheme. The main issues are:

- The proposal for a 'Village Green' designation on the eastern section of the site.
- Issues with contractors' access through the possible Village Green area.
- The preference from local residents to replace the area originally shown as a new football pitch with mounding and planting.
- Detailed design work on the Sustainable Urban Drainage System which has resulted in a revised layout of the water features.

3.3 A revised landscape master plan has been prepared accordingly. This omits any landscape works to the possible Village Green area, which if

necessary will be dealt with as a future planning application / phase of work. Access for the construction traffic is now to be taken off Halebank Road, although this will be minimised by virtue of the fact that material for the earthworks is being obtained on site, rather than imported.

- 3.4 Other amendments have been made to the design of the mounding and the water bodies, as outlined in 3.2. These will be available for the Board's inspection at the meeting.
- 3.5 The revised landscape master plan, albeit only a variation to that approved earlier, will be submitted for a further revised planning approval in May 2007. The reports, surveys and other material that was requested in the Conditions of the previous application, will be amended accordingly and submitted as part of the new application. This should reduce the number of conditions likely to be imposed on any forthcoming permission and enable a quicker start on site.
- 3.6 The implementation of the landscape work cannot start until after the completion of the Sludge Main diversion by United Utilities. The haulage road, which will be constructed through the site as part of UU's contract, will be retained and utilised by the landscape contractors. It is planned that the landscape works will therefore commence in Autumn 2007, subject to planning approval, successful determination of the leases, and the completion of United Utilities' contract.
- 3.6 The design for the landscape around Lovel's Hall will also be progressed, to complement any proposed road link in this area.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council adopted the DSRFP (3MG) Masterplan in December 2004. 3MG is heralded in the Council's Corporate Plan, the LSP's and Halton Borough Council's Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan, and supports the Council's Urban Renewal key corporate priority.
- 4.2 The proposals will help towards the achievement of Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan by the creation of new reedbeds and wildlife corridors, and by providing habitats for certain key species.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funding for the Landscape Infrastructure is available through the Council's Capital Programme for 3MG, and funding from the North West Development Agency.
- 5.2 The project is environmentally sustainable by creating a series of different habitats for wildlife, including wetlands, reedbeds, meadows

and woodland. It will enable any future built development to be drained in a sustainable manner, and will utilise material already on site to create the mounds, rather than importing / exporting material.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Landscape Scheme doesn't go ahead: unacceptable environmental and visual effect on Halebank
- 6.2 Delay in progress of scheme: planting does not have time to mature before the rail-related warehouse building proposed in the 3MG Masterplan is constructed; screening is less effective, hence the proposal to implement the scheme in advance.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 The proposed landscape scheme will provide free access to informal recreational opportunities for all the local community.

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

(NB 8.0, 9.0 AND 10.0 ONLY IF KEY DECISION)

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park – Landscape Masterplan	Picow Farm Depot	Phil Esseen
Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park – Revised Landscape Masterplan	Picow Farm Depot	Phil Esseen
EXB 162 (9th December 2004) Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park – The Draft Masterplan and Next Steps	Committee Services	Lynn Cairns
ESB9 (20th October 2005) Landscape Infrastructure, Halton Borough Council Fields Site, Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park	Committee Services	Lynn Cairns
ESB20 (26th April 2006) Update on Landscape Infrastructure, Halton B.C. Fields Site	Committee Services	Lynn Cairns